



FOREST SERVICE

*United States
Department of Agriculture*

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NEWS

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**BUREAU OF LAND
MANAGEMENT**

*United States
Department of Interior*

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Wildfire Awareness Week May 5th-11th, 2013

Living in the American West means living with and preparing for wildfire. California has designated May 5-11th as Wildfire Awareness Week in an effort to promote fire safety for one of the driest fire seasons on record for the eastern Sierra.

Wildfire Awareness Week focuses on fire safety around your home and while visiting your public lands.

As the summer recreation season starts, more visitors are traveling to the Eastern Sierra to enjoy camping, fishing, backpacking and other favorite activities. This frequently includes having a campfire or operating recreational equipment. Visitors should be extra careful while enjoying these special places. While lightning fires cannot be prevented, visitors can make a difference by helping us prevent human-caused fires.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service reminds homeowners who live in the wildland urban interface (WUI) to create and maintain 100 feet of defensible space around their homes. With proper landscaping and yard maintenance around structures, defensible space greatly reduces fire danger and the risk of fires spreading as well as providing a safer environment for firefighters who respond to wildfires in the WUI.

“With the low precipitation this winter combined with last year’s drought conditions we are asking homeowners to prepare now,” said Jeff Iler, Deputy Interagency Fire Management Officer for the Inyo National Forest and the BLM Bishop Field Office. “Raising awareness about 100 feet of defensible space is a crucial step in limiting the devastating effects of wildfires in the WUI.”

We urge the public to be fire safe when enjoying a campfire. If you have a campfire, you must have a valid campfire permit. These are available at the local ranger station or visitor centers for FREE. Always check the local area for Fire Restrictions which can change frequently.

Campfire safety guidelines include:

- Clear all flammable material away from the fire for a minimum of five feet in all directions.
- Have a responsible person in attendance at all times.
- Never leave your campfire unattended.
- Never have a campfire on windy days.
- Have a shovel and water to put the campfire out (approximately 5 to 6 gallons). Drown with water and stir with dirt, making sure all burned materials are extinguished. Feel with your hand to make sure it's out cold.

Dispersed camping and off-highway vehicles are a popular way to enjoy your public lands. However, faulty catalytic converters, mufflers, dragged trailer chains and vehicle fires start wildfires. Proper vehicle maintenance can go a long way to prevent these fires. As always, proper disposal of cigarettes is another key fire prevention step you can take while visiting. Never throw cigarettes out of a car window and douse them with water while outside.

For more information contact Deb Schweizer, Public Affairs Officer for the Inyo National Forest at (760) 873-2427.

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